

2009 VETERANS AND MILITARY LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Governor Ritter and the General Assembly enacted legislation that will better serve active-duty military and veterans who live in Colorado.

House Bill 1329 updates the distribution of new money from tobacco settlement funds to the Colorado Veterans Trust Fund. This means more money will be immediately available to pay for services, and to help the fund's principal grow.

HB09-1291 (Nikkel/Shaffer) -- Creates a clearinghouse so that veterans and their families can get information about support services and other valuable assistance they are eligible to receive. This is a much needed resource for veterans in these challenging times

HB09-1039 In-State Tuition Military Veterans (McNulty/Kopp) -- Makes honorably discharged veterans (and their dependents) who live in Colorado eligible for in-state tuition at public colleges and universities in Colorado.

HB09-1290, Student Financial Aid National Guard (Nikkel & Apuan/Harvey) – Spends an additional \$150,000 from the annual state budget to provide tuition assistance to Colorado National Guard members going to college. The total amount available will now be \$800,000 a year.

HB09-1054, UI Award Military Death Surviving Spouse (Looper/Morse) – A surviving spouse may now get unemployment insurance benefits if they are relocated because their active-duty military or reservist spouse was killed in combat.

HB09-1280, Colorado Youth Challenge Corps, National Guard (Looper/Tapia & Williams) – Allows the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to apply for federal funds to operate a residential Youth Challenge Corps program for at-risk youth.

SB09-56 Trinidad State Nursing Home (Sen. Kester/Rep. Riesberg) – Allows the Colorado Department of Human Services to transfer ownership of the Trinidad State Nursing Home to a public or private entity. The proceeds of the ownership transfer will help support state and veterans nursing homes in Colorado.

HB09-1205 Voting by Overseas Armed Forces (Looper/Williams) – Requires the Colorado Secretary of State to develop and implement an Internet-based pilot voting program for military members serving outside the U.S. The pilot program would be ready by the 2012 general election.

HB09-1325 Governor's Authority National Guard (Todd/Bacon) – Allows the Governor to activate the National Guard for a national special security event or situations where Coloradans are in imminent danger of emergency or disaster.